

M'NULTY INSANE SAYS THE JURY

**Prisoner Attempts Suicide
In Open Court, But
Thought Better of It,
Safety Razor Blade Wea-
pon Used**

An excellent example of the uncertainty of the average jury was furnished in superior court yesterday afternoon when twelve men listened to three physicians swear that in their opinion, John McNulty is perfectly sane, and then returned a verdict that John McNulty is insane.

A sensational episode was injected into the hearing by the subject when he attempted to cut his throat with a small piece of a safety razor blade. This attempt was made at the exact psychological moment when it would do the most good, and undoubtedly had an effect on the jury, which had risen from the box and was about to retire to deliberate the case. Nearly every juror was looking at McNulty, who suddenly drew the razor from his hat band and said "They are going to kill me, but I'll kill myself first."

With these words he slashed at his throat, but his nerve perceptibly weakened and he contented himself with damaging the cuticle enough to draw a little blood.

Officers sitting close at hand grappled with the man, took the razor away and handcuffed him. It is the opinion of those who were closely watching McNulty that he had cleverly selected the moment for his attempt at suicide. Half an hour before McNulty had insisted upon being given his hat, and before he secured the sharp blade fumbled for some time in the rim looking for it, carefully concealing his actions from those about him.

McNulty is indicted for assault with a deadly weapon upon one Peralta, and the evidence showed the prisoner to have been entirely rational until after his identification by Peralta, when he began developing signs of insanity. His pet hobby appeared to be that some one had accused him of stealing the court house, and he

expected to be put to death for the crime. Two of his cell mates were called to corroborate the averment that he "acted crazy."

Sheriff Adams testified that McNulty was all right when received at the jail; two recent employers of the man at Mesa declared that his mind was not in the least clouded when he worked for them; County Physician Tafel, who has had him under observation for several weeks declared positively that he believed the man to be sane, and this testimony was corroborated by Dr. Sargent and Dr. Danerum.

McNulty was represented by Attorney J. H. Langston. He will be committed to the asylum for the insane this morning in accordance with the verdict of the jury.

REVOLVER SHOT SENDS VICTIM

(Continued from Page One.)

out agitation. It transpired that these late comers, like the others, had no knowledge of where the noise came from and it was probably ten or fifteen minutes after the shooting, that the house was informed of what had occurred, and adjourned at once for the noon recess.

Coffman fired five shots in all, and every one of them took effect; four in the body of his victim and one in his own heart. One bullet passed through Gillett's heart, killing him almost instantly. A second bullet entered five inches below the heart and to the right of the heart, struck a rib, was diverted, and came out on the right side a little lower down. The third shot took effect just above the right hip joint, and the fourth made a flesh wound in the left thigh. The fifth shot he reserved for himself, and placed a bullet through his own heart.

Almost immediately after Coffman had completed the deal with Gillett and taken over the property he became obsessed with the idea that there was something wrong with the title to the land, and that he had been the victim of a swindle.

He talked the matter over with L. W. Coggins whose company abstracted the acreage, and that gentleman explained the fact that the purchaser was fully protected.

He is said to have told several acquaintances that he had "lost his money," and again that he had been

"stuck," and that he would sell the property for much less than he paid for it. From day to day his talk regarding the transaction grew more irrational, and he called upon Gillett in regard to the matter several times.

He also visited E. A. Spaulding and instructed him to sell the land, and then went to the office of Greene & Griffin where he offered the land at much less than he had paid for it. The Greene & Griffin company took the matter under advisement and finally made an appointment with Coffman to talk over the proposed deal.

Coffman went to the office of the company and remained for a long time, but seemed unable to concentrate his attention upon the proposed sale, and wore out the patience of the officer with whom he was dealing by his insistence upon an interpretation of nearly every word in the deed intimating that he was afraid of the deal, and did not see how he could pass a title which he did not have, notwithstanding the fact that his deed to the ten acres had been passed and guaranteed by the abstract company.

Yesterday afternoon the coroner and jury reviewed the remains and Coroner Johnstone fixed the hour of the inquest for ten o'clock this morning when a verdict in accordance with the facts as they are known will undoubtedly be rendered.

A letter received a few days ago by E. W. Griffin, of the E. J. Benning company couched in a rational tone, but indicating his earnest desire to sell is as follows:

"Phoenix, Ariz., May 2, 1912.

"I notice your advertisement in this morning's paper wanting 5 or 10 acres of unimproved land. I have a nice 10 acre unimproved tract of land nearly 2 miles east of the Indian school that I will sell at a bargain. This is not in the location you ask for but thought it might interest you anyway. It is off of the car line a little over a mile but the new car line that is building passes within three-eighths of a mile of the land. I will make you a bargain in the land if you are interested in it. I ask \$150 per acre 1/2 cash and the balance in 3 or 4 years at 8 per cent interest or will take \$140 per acre at a thousand dollars cash and the balance in 2 or 3 years, there is a mortgage on the land for \$300, would be glad to show you the land if interested. Mr. E. A. Spaulding of 505 N. 6th St. has the land for sale, would like for you to call on him. I might make a better deal than I have asked if

it interests you. I can be found at the Salt River Valley Nursery.

"Yours truly,

"E. COFFMAN,

"P. O. Box 4, Phoenix, Ariz.

"I divide the land in 5 acre tracts but would want mostly cash if I divided it. But I think we can arrange the cash part of it on any kind of a trade you want to make."

"E. C."

In Coffman's pockets were found a note, several letters, stamped, addressed and ready for mailing, a business card of the Spaulding firm, on the reverse side of which was scribbled a city address and the number of a postoffice box, a gold watch, and \$12.35.

The note was unsigned, and was as follows:

"Phoenix, Ariz., May 7.

"Notify Ben H. Coffman, Bremen, Kentucky. Have my remains embalmed and sent to the above name. Cost not to exceed \$200. Also notify J. R. Kohl of the Salt River Valley Nursery and L. C. Brown of the Phoenix restaurant to see that my remains are cared for. Mail the letters I have.

"E. COFFMAN."

The letters were addressed to John Armstrong, of this city, L. C. Brown, Phoenix restaurant, Ben Coffman, Bremen, Ky., and Miss Nannie Coffman, Sacramento, Ky. They are all held by Coroner Johnstone.

Shortly after the shooting Mr. Brown, to whom one of the letters was addressed, called at the coroner's office in response to a telephone summons and the letter was opened in his presence. This letter read as follows:

"Phoenix, Ariz., May 7.

"Mr. L. C. Brown,

"City.

"Dear Friend:—I am going to please ask you to have my trunk, suit case and telescope sent to Ben H. Coffman, of Bremen, Ky., Muhlberg Co. Above things are at the Salt River Valley Nursery. Also see that my remains are prepared and sent to above name. Charges to be light."

"I have been swindled out of my money in a land deal, and now I am going to carry things to a limit. I was doped and drugged and my mind was so unbalanced I didn't know what I was doing when I closed the deal."

"Yours truly,

"E. COFFMAN."

B. T. Gillett, father of the victim of the tragedy, was in a heart broken condition when seen yesterday afternoon by a representative of The Republican. "This tragedy is an awful thing," he said, "I never thought anything like this would happen."

Mr. Gillett's home is at 358 North Third street but for several days he, with his wife, has been staying at the home of his son, Malcolm Gillett, 329 East Williametta street. The wife of the victim had submitted to an operation some weeks ago and is not strong physically, although she is by no means ill and has been recovering nicely. She was, of course, terribly shocked by the tragedy, and is heartbroken over the calamity that has befallen her.

"I did not know this man Coffman," Mr. Gillett said, "although I have heard Malcolm speak of him frequently. This deal between them took place a week ago last Saturday. Malcolm sold to Coffman ten acres of land east of the Indian school for \$125 an acre, or some such price. The deal was made through the Spaulding real estate office. Afterwards Coffman went to Spaulding and wanted to sell again. He told other people he would take him an acre. He seemed to think that in some way there was something wrong with the title, but there was not, and even if there had been he was fully protected by a bond given by Mr. Coggins' abstract company. This bond guaranteed the title and contained an indemnity clause guaranteeing the full amount."

"But somehow Coffman couldn't seem to understand it. He talked to my son about it and he also talked to Mr. Coggins. They both tried to explain it but it seemed to do no good. I think, although I am not certain of the fact, that he went to some lawyer to consult regarding the title."

"Several times Malcolm spoke to me about the man and said he acted crazy—that he couldn't understand what he was told. I think he got the idea into his head that he had been swindled. Also, I think he was sick. It is probable his mind was not just right and I think when he got to studying over this matter his mental condition became worse and then he conceived the idea that he had been swindled and started out to do the shooting."

Malcolm Gillett, the victim, was not quite 24 years old. He has been employed in the surveyor general's office 12 or 13 years. He was married a year ago. Mrs. Gillett is a cousin of the wife of J. B. Girard, former territorial engineer.

There were two sons, Malcolm and Leslie. The last named is employed in the government mineralogical service, with headquarters in Santa Fe. He has been informed by telegraph of the tragedy and the funeral arrangements are held in abeyance pending his arrival.

HIGH SCHOOL FRATERNITIES

Twenty-five states are represented in a crusade which the lawmakers and school authorities of the country are waging against the high school fraternities, according to a report which has just been issued for free distribution by the United States bureau of education. Of these, thirteen states have passed legislative enactments hostile to the secret orders, while the school boards of important cities in the other twelve states have adopted like measures within their own jurisdiction.

All states having laws on the subject provide a penalty of suspension or expulsion from the school for all those who join these orders. The most drastic laws were passed by Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska, whose legislatures made it a misdemeanor for any one even to solicit members to these organizations. Michigan and Ohio made it a misdemeanor for a school officer to fail or refuse to carry out the anti-high school fraternities law. Other states which prohibit these orders are California, Indiana, Kansas,

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